



Éire Óg an Aonaigh

Cumann Iomán agus Peil Éire Óg,

Aonach

Co. Thiobraid Árann



Nenagh Éire Óg Hurling and Football Club

Code of Ethics, Conduct & Practice.

May 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Note from Senior Chairperson.....	4
Part 1.....	5
Club activities	5
<i>Code of Conduct – Club officials / Officers.....</i>	6
<i>Code of Conduct – Players / Mentors / Club members</i>	6
Part 2.....	7
Child protection	7
<i>General practice</i>	8
<i>Code of Conduct – Juvenile Players.....</i>	8
<i>Code of Conduct – Juvenile mentors / coaches</i>	8
<i>Code of Conduct – Parents.....</i>	9
<i>Movement of players between Groups.....</i>	10
<i>Player Welfare</i>	11
<i>Supervision of Away Trips.....</i>	11
<i>Club Children’s Officer</i>	12
Part 3.....	13
Complaint, Discipline and Appeals	13
<i>Complaint’s procedure</i>	13
<i>General conduct.....</i>	15
<i>Appeals procedures</i>	15
Summary.....	16

Introduction

This document was prepared by the Club executive officers and sets out a Code of conduct for all club officials, officers, members, mentors, and players associated with the club.

The 'Code' is divided into THREE parts:

- Part 1: Draws from the official Code of conduct for GAA club officials/officers. It also deals with club activities and procedures in relation to officials, members, mentors, and players

- Part 2: Concentrates on the well-being of children in our care and draws heavily from the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland.

- Part 3: Deals with fair, transparent, and consistent procedures that provides due process to all parties to a complaint, dispute, or disciplinary matter within the club

Note from Senior Chairperson

As Chairperson, I am delighted to contribute to this wonderful document that outlines the Codes and Practices for our Juvenile Club.

The reality is that a Fair Process and its application is now more important than ever as we live in an era where we all thrive for gender equality, anti-racism and a society that insists on fair play for all. Unless we are blind to these needs then we have no other option than to ensure that we embrace them in a meaningful and tangible manner.

The need for this document and these opening comments are because we must be clear on what we are aiming for in both the sporting and social context. We have over the years had a number of people issues that have lessened our standards and while we all strive to improve our coaching techniques on the field of play, we likewise have a responsibility to raise our off the field standards. Therefore, as a Club we have no other option than to Respect everyone involved in the club and that includes, Our Children, Our Parents, Our Fellow Coaches, Our Match Officials and all Our Volunteers who work so hard behind the scenes. To achieve this we need empathy, solidarity and a social goal that supports this culture. We have no other option but to acknowledge our past and insist that the standard going forward is Platinum Standard. We have an opportunity to convert all our energy and talent to achieve this standard and Leadership from every section is the simple solution.

We have got to find a way of working together and at all times be prepared to offer the hand of friendship as refusing to co-operate is simply not an option. At times we have lacked the ability to see beyond past obstacles and this in turn, prevents us in our ability to jump future hurdles. We all deserve respect, and we must treat the people we meet at all times in a similar manner. Respect for one another is the key that will open the doors of future opportunities to make our Club the standard bearer for other clubs to follow.

Is mise le meas

John Tooher

Chairperson

Nenagh Éire Óg Hurling & Football Club

Part 1
Club activities

As a Club we are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all club officials, officers, members, mentors, and players. Every individual in the club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club. In particular the rights, dignity and worth of every person must be respected and no person should feel threatened, vilified or insulted.

All members of the club are subject to consequences which may lead to discipline or possible termination of membership of the GAA as deemed necessary by the club Executive due to failure to comply with this code of conduct. All members agree to abide by these rules as part of their membership / registration. It is the responsibility of all members to be familiar with the guidelines set forth in the code of conduct and for parents to explain and promote this code of conduct with their own children.

Code of Conduct – Club officials / Officers

Club Officials / Officers should be full members of Cumann Luthchleas Gael (C.L.G.) and have full knowledge of the Rules and Regulations of the Association and be bounded by them (in line with the Manuals). The qualities portrayed by Officials / Officers of the club are:

- Knowledge and acceptance of GAA ideals
- Act within the Rules and the Law of Cumann Luthcleas Gael (C.L.G.)
- Uphold the constitution of C.L.G. in the spirit as well as in the law
- Provide leadership and motivate people to work for the aims and ideals of C.L.G.
- Good community standing
- Dedication
- Integrity and Respect in Relationships
- High standards of organisation
- Moral courage and willingness to devote time

Code of Conduct – Players / Mentors / Club members

Everyone makes a commitment to the success of the club and shows mutual respect for all. Everyone involved must work together in the preparation, be committed to the cause, and share in the enjoyment of competing and representing the club and the parish of Nenagh. To promote best behaviour, it is necessary to outline our expectations regarding what is acceptable behaviour, and these are outlined as follows.

- Club membership must be paid at the start of the season.
- Players should endeavour to attend all training sessions
- Players should always inform team management in advance if unable to attend training or matches.
- Players should arrive on time for training and matches.
- Treat fellow players, mentors, club officers, referees, and match officials with respect.
- Players should prepare properly for games - abuse of alcohol or late nights etc is not acceptable.
- Do not use foul or abusive language.
- Avoid verbal exchanges with referees or opposing mentors / players
- Always promote the club in a positive way.
- Treat club property with respect.
- Be a role model for peers and underage players in the club by getting involved in other club activities such as club meetings, fund raising etc
- Always encourage and support players, coaches, and officials
- Behave responsibly on the sideline.
- Do not coach or officiate from the Stands.

Part 2

Child protection

Sport provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn new skills, become more confident and maximize their own unique potential. These benefits will increase through a positive and progressive approach to the involvement of children in sport that places the needs of the child first and winning and competition second. Winning and losing are an important part of sport but they must be kept in a healthy perspective. Adults must contribute to the creation of a positive sporting environment for young people.

Children should be encouraged to win in an open and fair way. Behaviour which constitutes cheating in any form should be discouraged. The trust implicit in adult-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all adults, voluntary or professional, to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the child, while engaged in their sporting activity.

General practice

All coaches and team mentors working with underage teams (teams under 17) must undertake a child protection course, and also be Garda vetted. While not exhaustive, the following guidelines should be followed in so far as is possible and practicable

- Plan and manage child activities, thus creating an organized and healthy environment which will minimize opportunities for children to suffer harm.
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own and avoid spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Avoid taking children to your home or taking children on journeys alone in your car.
- Players should be discouraged from using shower facilities.
- Players should be prohibited from using mobile phones in dressing rooms.
- Avoid actions, language or conduct which threatens or insults any player.
- Avoid using showers in the presence or company of juveniles.
- Make appropriate provision for the administration of First Aid and insure another adult is always present.
- Rotate the system used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always last to be selected.
- Never use corporal punishment or physical force.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol use in the presence of players.

Code of Conduct – Juvenile Players

- Always do your best, play fairly, and have fun
- Always shake hands before and after a match
- Respect officials/referees and accept their decisions
- Do not shout at or argue with the referee, officials, teammates, or opponents
- Bullying is totally unacceptable
- Avoid using foul or abusive language
- Always remember that hurling and football is a team game and encourage your fellow players
- Respect the club and its property

Code of Conduct – Juvenile mentors / coaches

- Ensure regular games for the greatest number of players.
- Instil in players and mentors a good attitude and positive approach to our games particularly around punctuality, dress code and choice of language
- Avoid the use of players 3 years younger than the age grade of any competition, except in exceptional circumstances.

- Avoid physical or verbal abuse
- Coach by example and encourage sportsmanship and fair play on the field of play among juvenile players
- Ensure that sufficient time and attention is given to less talented players.
- Do not rebuke a child for making a mistake, always encourage
- Try to ensure that training is an enjoyable experience for the players
- Do not put an over emphasis on results
- Avoid verbal exchanges with referees or opposing mentors / players
- Encourage respect for Match Officials by your own behaviour towards such officials.

Code of Conduct – Parents

- Always encourage and support your child in their sport
- Be familiar with those mentors who are coaching your child
- Behave responsibly on the sideline
- Bring children to and from training on time
- Encourage your child to play by the rules
- Ensure your child has the proper training/playing gear.
- Support the coaches and help out wherever necessary
- Ensure that your child is registered and paid-up
- Respect the coaches' decisions and encourage your children to do the same
- Show your support for your child/team by attending matches on a regular basis and assisting in the organisation of club activities

Movement of players between Groups

All players must train with their own age group. During the championship knockout stages, this will be reviewed to allow teams to have some access to younger players for tactical purposes. All players must prioritise their own group for training and games.

If a player is prioritising their own group and wants to do a session with an older group, the management of the older group must make the mentors of the younger group aware that the player is also training with their group, this will be monitored by the juvenile committee. The juvenile committee will review this on a case-by-case basis. If a decision cannot be made by the juvenile committee, then an arbitrary group (Nominated by Senior Club Chairperson) will decide if the player can train with both groups.

Players from younger teams should be available to play challenge matches or official (league/championship) matches if panel numbers are below minimum levels. Before organising any match where it is anticipated that players from a younger group may be required, it is important to check with the management of the team you need players from to ensure there is no clash (Challenge match or Training). If players are needed from a younger age group, the management that requires the players will need to discuss it with the management from child's team. Then the management of the child's team will speak to the parent to let them know that the other mentors will be in contact about playing matches when needed but not for training.

Players from younger age groups should be brought up on a 'Stop Gap' basis to facilitate fielding a full team plus substitution players. Players from the age group should be given priority for game time, unless the team is at a championship knockout stage.

A player from a younger group whose age team have been knocked out of their championship, can train with the older team if the older team is still training/competing.

Common sense, communication and consideration is needed here to ensure players' welfare is observed and that all teams have an opportunity to prepare properly by playing matches.

Nenagh Éire Óg Juvenile Club operates to facilitate maximising player participation, player development and being competitive at the various underage groups and grades. Achieving these objectives requires groups functioning in seamless collaboration with each other and practicing clear, timely inter group communication.

It is anticipated that all coaches and managers of juvenile groups as part of their roles within the club support this effort.

Player Welfare

- An adequate break needs to be given between a match day and the next training session for players
- Training sessions should be no longer than 1 hour 30 minutes, and should have no longer than 60 minutes of physical training or play

Supervision of Away Trips

Attention should be paid to the following factors if away trips are being contemplated:

- Written permission of parents / guardians should be obtained for all overnight away trips.
- Parents / guardians should inform the club / team mentors at the outset of any medical condition or special needs of their child.
- The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined
- Where there are mixed teams there should be at least one female mentor.
- As a rule, adults should not share a room with a child. Where the presence of an adult is required there should be more than one child in the room with the adult. If children are sharing a room, it should be with those of the same age and sex.
- Adequate adult to child ratios should be observed.
- Special care should be taken by both host and visiting clubs in the selection of homes for overnight stays, and where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family.
- If a child suffers a serious injury or accident the parents/guardians should be informed as soon as possible.

Club Children's Officer

The appointment of a Children's Officer is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere within Nenagh Éire Óg GAA Club. S/he will act as a resource for all members of the club with regard to children's issues. S/he will ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and can talk freely about their experiences in their sports activities. The Children's Officer will have access to the Club Executive Committee. S/he will have as her primary aim the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. The Children's Officer will have the following functions:

- To promote awareness of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland within the club and particularly among the children and their parents/guardians. This could be achieved by the production of information leaflets, the establishment of children's/age group specific notice boards and by regular information meetings for the children and their parents/guardians
- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- To provide an accessible resource to children
- To see that children, know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. Information disclosed by a child to the Children's Officer or any other adult within the club should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines Children First and the Department of Health and Social Services
- To encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities and co-operate with parents/guardians in ensuring that each child enjoys his/her involvement in sport
- To act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in children's sport
- To report regularly to the Club Executive Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders

The Children's Officers does not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and has no counselling or therapeutic role. It is, however, possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer.

Part 3

Complaint, Discipline and Appeals

Despite people's best intentions in any work-place or voluntary organisation, issues arise from time to time that cause grievance, dispute or the necessity to apply a disciplinary measure.

Nenagh Éire Óg GAA club is a voluntary, sporting organisation and on that basis, every effort should be made to avoid formal disciplinary and grievance procedures wherever possible. Early and very informal interventions in mediation and counselling should be actively used by Club managers, mentors and coaches to prevent situations that might otherwise escalate into a more serious situation later.

Inevitably however, there will be situations that arise from time to time where best informal efforts at mediation and counselling fail to resolve grievance, disciplinary or relationship situations. It is in this context, and **only** in this context, that a more formal and structured approach will be applied.

These more formal approaches have been established to provide a fair, transparent and consistent procedure that provides due process to all parties to the grievance or disciplinary matter.

Complaint's procedure

A grievance means a complaint or dispute by a Club member on any matter. It is desirable that any such complaints are settled as quickly and as low key as possible. Members are encouraged to try to settle their complaint informally before following the process outlined below:

1. The member should present their grievance to their Team Manager / Club official.
2. If the matter is not resolved within 2 weeks, the member (accompanied by a fellow member if he/she desires) should present their grievance to a **Complaints Review Group**. This group will examine the issue and interview both the member concerned and his/her coach. The member may be accompanied by a fellow member if he/she desires.
3. If the matter is still not resolved within a 2 week period, the member may then present their case to the Club executive officer committee. Such an appeal will be considered by the Club executive officers and the club member will be advised of their decision within seven days of their meeting. The club member may be accompanied by a fellow member if he/ she desires.

4. The decision of the Club executive officers will be final.

The **Complaints Review Group** will be an ad-hoc group of three members formed by the club Chairperson by necessity only, to address the case under review. The Review Group will include at least one member of the Club Committee. In order to avoid conflict of interest, no person who is a family member of either the member or his/her manager may participate in the Grievance Review Group or in the Club executive officer's review.

Disciplinary procedure

In the event of disciplinary action being taken against any member of the Club IE: Player, Team Manager or Official, the matter will be dealt with as follows...

1. In the event of an initial breach of Club rules, safety practices or misconduct, the matter will be addressed informally by the relevant Manager / Team Mentor / Club official through direct coaching, counsel, and advice.
2. In the event that there is a further breach of rules, the club Chairperson will convene a **Disciplinary Review Group**. This group will examine the case and interview the member concerned. The member may be accompanied by a fellow member if he/she desires. This group has the right to impose sanctions such as temporary or fixed term suspensions or other appropriate sanctions, up to and including termination of membership.
3. Any determination on the part of the Disciplinary Review Group may be appealed to the Club executive officers committee.
4. The decision of the Club executive officers will be final.

The **Disciplinary Review Group** will be an ad-hoc group of three members formed by the club Chairperson by necessity only, to address the case under review. The Review Group will include at least one member of the Club Committee. In order to avoid conflict of interest, no person who is a family member of either the member or his/her manager may participate in the review Group or in the club executive officer's review.

Following its deliberations, the disciplinary review group may issue any of the following sanctions as it deems necessary:

- Issue warning as to future behaviour
- Suspension from training
- Suspension from club teams
- Suspension from club
- Expulsion from club

General conduct

The Club expects all members to behave as responsible individuals. Rules are kept to a minimum, but certain basic requirements are both for the individual and common good of all. Serious misconduct by a club member will result in that member having to appear before the club disciplinary committee.

The following are examples of behaviour and actions which can result in serious disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the club. This is not an exhaustive list and serious misconduct is not limited to these behaviours only.

- Wilful damage to club property or that of visiting teams
- Bringing the club into disrepute through a player's actions during a training session, match or any event organised by the club.
- Insubordination including refusal to carry out the instructions of a coach
- Serious breach of safety requirements,
- Sexual harassment / Bullying of another individual
- Dishonesty within the club
- Violation of any criminal law
- Acts of physical violence
- Any action by a club member in breach of the club code of ethics, conduct & practice.

Appeals procedures

- At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, a person has the right to appeal against any disciplinary action being taken.
- Any appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary review group should be made in writing to the club executive officers committee, via the club Secretary, within seven days of receipt of the Disciplinary review group decision.
- Such an appeal will be considered by the Club executive officers and the member will be advised of their decision within seven days of the meeting.
- The decision of the Club executive officers will be final.

Summary

No code of ethics, conduct and practice can replace the behaviour of an individual. However, this code is intended to help you focus on areas of risk and provide you with guidance in fostering a culture based on maintaining the integrity and reputation of the club and protecting the dignity of all people associated with it. Fundamental to this principle is the right to have a sporting environment where each member should be able to say to themselves and others...

“Nenagh Éire Og is a club that shows genuine respect for each individual member and I am proud to be part of it”

We will ensure best practice throughout the club by disseminating this code of ethics, conduct & practice to club officials, officers, members, mentors, and players. We encourage you to review this information and familiarise yourself with the standards expected in Nenagh Éire Óg GAA club.

Signed and dated 19th May 2022.

This document will be reviewed annually but will be updated as required.

Club executive officer committee

John Tooher	Seamus Cleary	Catherine McTiernan
Club Chairperson 087-9500912	Club Finance Officer 086-2525805	Club Secretary 086-8050423

Juvenile club

Niall Cahill Chairperson	Mel Gleeson Treasurer	Tom Gleeson Secretary
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Club Children's Officer – Eileen Kennedy